

Name: **Powder Mountain Ruedloff Ridge WY-030-12N95W22-2012**

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

No X Yes _____ (if yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the names of those areas):

a) Inventory Source: _____NA_____

b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): _____NA_____

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): _____NA_____

d) BLM District (s)/Field Office(s): _____NA_____

2. BLM Inventory Finds on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Inventory Source:

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name **Powder Mountain-Ruedloff Ridge WY-030-12N95W22-2012** Acreage
18,362.58

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes X No

Describe the boundaries of the area (roads, property lines, etc.). If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check “Yes” and describe the exception. If more than one inventory area is involved, list the acres in each and evaluate each area/sub-area separately. In completing steps (1) – (5), use additional space as necessary.

The unit is bound on the north by BLM Road 3330 a.k.a. Cherokee Trail. The unit is bound to the west by a Class 3 Light Duty Road which was previously graded and maintained by industry. The unit is bound on the south by the Rawlins Field Office boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: The Powder Mountain-Ruedloff Ridge area under consideration is 18,362.58 acres of BLM public land. It is located within the following townships:

TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION	TOWNSHIP	RANGE	SECTION
t12n	r95w	22	t12n	r95w	8
t12n	r95w	21	t12n	r95w	7
t12n	r95w	20	t12n	r96w	12
t12n	r95w	19	t12n	r96w	11
t12n	r96w	24	t12n	r96w	10
t12n	r96w	23	t12n	r96w	9
t12n	r96w	22	t12n	r96w	8
t12n	r96w	21	t12n	r96w	7
t12n	r96w	20	t12n	r97w	12
t12n	r96w	19	t12n	r95w	4
t12n	r97w	24	t12n	r95w	5
t12n	r97w	23	t12n	r95w	6
t12n	r95w	15	t12n	r96w	1
t12n	r95w	16	t12n	r96w	2
t12n	r95w	17	t12n	r96w	3
t12n	r95w	18	t12n	r96w	4
t12n	r96w	13	t12n	r96w	5
t12n	r96w	14	t12n	r96w	6
t12n	r96w	15	t13n	r95w	33

t12n	r96w	16	t13n	r95w	32
t12n	r96w	17	t13n	r95w	31
t12n	r96w	18	t13n	r96w	36
t12n	r97w	13	t13n	r96w	35
t12n	r97w	14	t13n	r96w	34
t12n	r95w	10	t13n	r96w	33
t12n	r95w	9	t13n	r96w	32

The dominant vegetation cover is sagebrush-grassland. The primary land uses are for oil & gas exploration and livestock grazing. The primary, dispersed recreational activities in the area are hunting and hiking.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Description: Description: The 77.93 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 3.64 miles of wilderness inventory roads (i.e., well access roads) detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads are demonstrated in photos 1, 7-12, 14, 22, and 25-48. When hiking across the Powder Mountain Ruedloff Ridge Unit, the casual observer cannot escape the constant view of primitive routes. These primitive routes create noticeable linear intrusions and disturbances that interrupt the experience of any wilderness character briefly encountered in areas untrammelled by the works of man.

The area contains 19 oil and gas wells throughout the Powder Mountain-Ruedloff Ridge Unit (see locations in unit map and examples in photos 3-6). These oil and gas installations within the unit represent permanent improvements and loss of primeval character. When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, 14 of these wells are abandoned, two are flowing, and three have expired permits. Despite the variation in status, these wells remain as existing installations that detract from the naturalness and, cumulatively, are substantially noticeable to the casual observer while hiking through the unit. All wells, which are not abandoned, are managed as active wells and receive commercial vehicle traffic for periodic maintenance. This traffic would interrupt the casual observer's experience of wilderness character due to road dust plumes and the contrast between the white coloration of these vehicles moving across the tan, brown, and olive landscape. Well pads do not receive final reclamation approval until they have been plugged and abandoned. Visual contrasts created by surface disturbances, including well pad turn-arounds, soil exposure around the facilities, and a rectangular area of wheat grass, remain until final reclamation is established.

The Powder Mountain Ruedloff Ridge Unit also contains 25 man-made reservoirs (see locations on unit map and example in Photo 23). When the casual observer encounters these man-made borrow pits and impounded reservoirs, the linear and textual contrast on the landscape attracts the attention of the observer to this modification constructed with mechanized equipment.

The casual observer is often attracted to bodies of water while hiking. Water adds interest and diversity to the landscape. When arriving at any of the 25 reservoirs, the casual observer would notice that it is not a natural lake and that they have encountered an impounded, muddy borrow pit surrounded with dikes. The hiker seeking refreshment from clean water, would quickly notice that this "reservoir" is designed for cattle operations where the water is unfit for human consumption or swimming. The numerous range improvements, including the 25 reservoirs, three water wells, and 12.17 miles of fence, were constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations. These improvements give the casual observer a perception that they are visitors to a cattle range rather than a wilderness untrammelled by the works of man. While the presence of cattle is compatible with a natural landscape for wilderness inventory purposes, the noticeable presence of numerous grazing-related developments in this unit is not.

In sum, the cumulative impacts on naturalness including the numerous oil and gas wells, primitive routes, wilderness inventory roads, and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the Powder Mountain Ruedloff Ridge Unit to a level that is incompatible with the definitions of wilderness provided in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (incorporated in FLPMA 1976):

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

(3) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(4) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational scenic or historical value)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

Summary of Analysis

Area Name and/or Number: Powder Mountain-Ruedloff Ridge WY-030-12N95W22-2012

Summary

Results of analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities of solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Check one:

_____ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

___X___ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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Team members:

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